

# NOME OF HERMOPOLIS/AKHETATEN - 1



Thoth

## ■ Introduction

Ancient Egyptians lived along a very narrow band of land that was made fertile by the Nile River's yearly flooding. They called this land KMT (*kemet*, or the Black Land, for the dark color of its earth). All else was DSHRT (*deshret*, or the Red Land, for its red sands and scorching heat). Another name for ancient Egypt is **Tamera**, "the land of the inundation."

From earliest times Ancient Egyptians unified neighboring villages into districts called *hesep*, or in Greek, **nome**. Each nome had its own government, capital city, protective god or gods, and temple. The nomes had carefully marked boundaries with records kept of their amount of farm land and their canals with all their branches. Each nome had a standard, a portable sign that included an image of the nome deity or a symbol of religious power.

## ■ Nome Assignment:

1. Create a **nome standard**, including the number of your nome. Use the symbols and colors of your nome deity.
2. Decide who is to be the **noble of your nome** (first rank); the **administrator** (second rank); the scribe (third rank); the **artisan** (fourth rank). The rest of the members of your nome will be the **laborers or farmers** (fifth rank).
3. Each member of the nome is to make a **menat** showing rank by the number of rows: first rank

## ■ About the nome

- You are a member of the nome of **Un**, the fifteenth nome of upper Egypt. Its capital city was Chemennu or in Greek—**Hermopolis**.
- Hermopolitans believed the first land that arose out of the waters of chaos had been in their city. (Many other cities had similar myths.)
- Hermopolis/Akhetaten was the main cult center for Thoth, the god of wisdom and of scribes. However, as in all of ancient Egypt, many gods and goddesses were recognized and worshipped. Egypt was *polytheistic*, meaning Egyptians worshipped many gods.
- For a short time period a great city had been built on the Nile River south of Hermopolis, but still in the fifteenth nome, called **Akhetaten**, now known by the name of Tel El Amarna.
- At Akhetaten only **Aten**—the sun at its highest and strongest—and the pharaoh Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti (Aten's earthly representatives) were worshipped. During the 17 years of his reign, Akhenaten tried to convince all Egyptians to worship only Aten, Akhenaten and Nefertiti, but he was unsuccessful.
- The city **Akhetaten** was beautiful, carefully planned, and skillfully built. The single story houses had large yards and gardens. Akhetaten had the world's earliest toilet seats, made of ceramics, wood, and stone. They were put above large bowls of sand.
- Akhenaten and his beautiful wife **Nefertiti** are remembered mostly in fragments now, for after the pharaoh's death the attractive city he created to honor his god was torn down stone by stone, and the stones were used to build walls and gates and temples to other gods.
- Since Akhenaten was considered a heretic, efforts were made by his successors to erase his name from the land of the Nile. To an ancient Egyptian, such efforts were considered the worst form of punishment, for it meant the loss of an eternal afterlife.

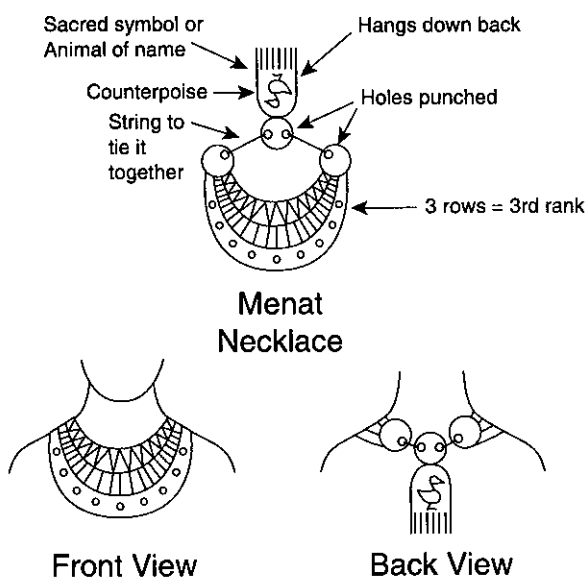
(the noble)—five rows; second rank (the administrator)—four rows; third rank (the scribe)—three rows; fourth rank (the artisan)—two rows; and fifth rank (the laborer or farmer)—one row.

4. The **menat** should use the distinctive colors and/or symbols of your nome.
5. Make a **headband** for each member of your nome, using either an uraeus representing Wedjat or a vulture representing Nekhbet. Nomes in Lower Egypt need to make an uraeus with a cobra; nomes in Upper Egypt need to make a nekhbet with a vulture.

# NOME OF HERMOPOLIS/AKHETATEN - 2

## ■ Gods of Hermopolis and Akhetaten

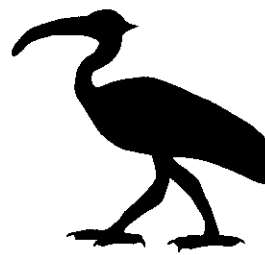
- Thoth was considered the inventor of speech and came into existence at the beginning of time on a lotus (waterlily).
- Ra allowed Thoth to create the moon and, in a culture that measured time by a lunar calendar, Thoth became known as the "Measurer of Time." He was respected as the inventor of mathematics, engineering, and astronomy.
- Also considered the inventor of words, Thoth taught Isis the many spells needed to restore Osiris to life. As a result, he became associated with learning and was the god of scribes.
- Thoth was seen as the god of wisdom and the upholder of justice. He was often pictured in the Hall of Judgment after death when the heart of the deceased was weighed against the feather of truth, or **Maat**.
- Thoth's sacred animals were the ibis and the baboon. Four million ibis mummies were discovered at Saqqara near Memphis in the first nome of Lower Egypt. Each ibis was individually wrapped and placed in its own pottery jar. Ancient Egyptians would pay to have an animal sacred to a god mummified as a way to honor the god.
- Thoth is often shown holding papyrus and a reed pen to record judgments. His symbolic color was silver like the boat of the moon he ferried across the sky each night.
- Aten was the sun at its zenith, shown as a red disk whose rays reach down as hands holding **ankhs** to earth.
- Both Akhenaten and Nefertiti were shown as being worshipped in Akhetaten and acting as the priests to Aten. Nefertiti had prayers written to her.



## ■ General Rules for Egyptians

As an **Egyptian**, you must preserve "**Maat**," an important ethical concept that combines "order, truth, justice, and righteousness."

1. Keep your nome area neat and organize all your efforts.
2. Be honest in all you say, and do not claim others' work as your own.
3. Be fair and listen carefully to fellow Egyptians. The Instruction of Amenemopet says: "Give your ears to hear what is said. Give your heart to understand what is said."
4. Be a committed member of "the Land of the Nile."



## ■ Rules for Hermopolitans

1. As a Hermopolitan, work to be the best in writing assignments so that your words might honor Thoth, the first scribe. You have the responsibility to be the best of students. You will not depend upon the magic of your deity for this to occur—but on the efforts all individual members in your nome.
2. As you speak up often, clearly tell the truth, for Thoth served **Maat**. Justice is important for all, and your nome must lead the other nomes in searching for what is right for your country.
3. Your nome should be diligent in mathematical endeavors and careful in any engineering or building task. *Keep careful track of the time.* Perhaps your nome would serve as timekeepers for all of "the Black Land."
4. Use the **symbols of Thoth**: the reed pen, the papyrus scroll, the ibis, the baboon, and the moon. Use his color silver to accent your work.
5. If you incorporate your nome's red disk in art and Hieroglyphs, the sun's rays will reach out to your nome in praise.
6. Remember to enjoy life—symbolized by the ankh—as all Egyptians did. Honor **Maat** and honor the beauty of the world. Nefertiti would be pleased. "Beauty of thought and purpose last into eternity."

Live up to the above and **Maat** will honor your nome, which will rise like the sun to shine on all "the land of the Nile" for a million years.